1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

A further 295 in the Main Sea Level Water Table produced 606,329 gallons, while 407 in the depressed parts of the Upper Coralline yielded 409,881 gallons, a total of 1,376,762 gallons from less than 3,000 pumped wells. The problem of salinity in sea-level water tables is illustrated by the Wied tal-I'waies where in 1945 private wells yielded water with a salinity ranging from 22 to 142/100,000 while in 1953 the corresponding figures were 25 and 200/100,000 (10). 312

Finally, an accurate check has been kept on water obtained from those springs on the Rabat-Dingli Plateau which feed aqueducts for town supply. Over a period of years these have yielded an average of 251 million gallons annually, equivalent to 26.7 per cent. of the supply provided by an average yearly rainfall of 20.51 inches on a catchment area of 3.16 square miles (11).

A survey carried out by J. Baldacchino in 1942-45 provides some data on the amount of water used to irrigate various crops (12). There can be little doubt that much water is wastefully applied. The highest rate of application was that to summer marrows which received 30 waterings, 210,000 gallons per tomna, the equivalent of 33 inches of rain. The most striking fact, however, concerned the spring potato crop which took 15 waterings, 90,000 gallons per tomna, equivalent to 15 inches of rain. This was water applied from January to April, some of the wettest months of the year, and is perhaps an adequate comment on the suitability or otherwise of this crop to Maltese conditions - a question raised elsewhere in the present volume. Careless storage and prodigal application of water under conditions of intense isolation and evaporation indicate an uneconomic use of a limited resource.

Irrigation and the piped supply thus appear to make approximately equal demands on water resources - now, a probable 2,000 million gallons in the case of the former and a more certain 2,415 million gallons in the latter. This total of over 4,400 million gallons consumed annually may be compared with an annual supply from rainfall of 27,550 million gallons (assuming an average precipitation of 20 inches over an area of 95 square miles). What is not known is how much of this latter total percolates to the water tables and how much is lost at various stages of the water cycle by direct run-off, evaporation, transpiration and seepage into the Mediterranean. Some of the answers will be provided by the evapotranspirometer stations recently established in Malta.

Gozo has not thus far been mentioned and relatively little hydrological investigation has been carried out there. The general arrangement of water tables irrigation practice, etc., are little different in principle from those described for Malta. The lower population density, the absence of a large urban element and the generally lower standard of living in the material sense make the problem a good deal less acute. Consumption per head from the public supply is approximately half that of Malta. 184 312

There is in the Maltese Islands, and particularly in Malta itself, conflict between urban and rural uses of water just as there is in the use of labour, land and capital. When the resource is already limited as it is in the case of water, the conflict becomes more apparent and its resolution depends on economic as much as on purely physical factors. Water shortage is a background against which all plans for future development, including the industrial, must be viewed. 312 369

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(1) MORRIS, T. O.: The Water Supply Resources of Malta. Govt. Printing Office, Valletta, 1952.
(2) By common usage in Malta. the term 'water table' is applied to the whole body of water contained within the aquifer and not, as elsewhere, to its upper surface alone.
(3) MORRIS, op cit., para. 152, p. 62.
(4) ibid., para. 225, p. 109.
(5) ibid.
(6) Report on the Working of the Water and Electricity Department for the Year 1952-53; Govt. Printing Office, Valletta, 1954, Para. 11.
(7) MORRIS, op cit., footnote to table 15.
(8) Report on the Working of the Water and Electricity Department for the Year 1953-54; Govt. Printing Office, Valletta, 1955, Para. 2.
(9) Report...etc., for the Year 1955-56, Appendix IV.
(10) Report...etc., for the Year 1952-53, Appendix IV.
(11) MORRIS, op cit. Table 8.
(12) ibid. Table 14.

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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Lower Coralline rocks. This correspondence may be noted at the tip of Qawra, in a narrow strip at tal-Qraj (86) where the Coralline plunges under the alluvial infill of Bur Marrad, and inland from Qala San Marku. On the more tractable Globigerina, as at Bugibba (32) and il-Qasam ta'San Gorg (88), big-field cultivation of cereals and sulla is the rule (see also p. 197). Degree of exposure to northerly winds is a second factor controlling the farming pattern. In the sheltered depression of il-Maghtab (91), this is reflected in the greater importance of potatoes and the larger amount of settlement. These two regions have until recently been remote from the main streams of life and the recent construction of a coastal road linking St. George's and Salina Bays has, as yet, had little effect on society and farming.

B.IX. WIED IL-GHASEL

In this large lowland, Lower Coralline and Globigerina rocks are covered by recent sediments of marine and alluvial origin which thin out west and south to expose the solid rock. Borings indicate a sediment depth of over 14 feet in the floor of the depression, at which level (approximately sea-level) a saline water-table occurs. Irrigation, in contrast to the practice in Wied tal-I'wales, is carried on only on the western side of the depression, where pumps tap water percolating from the Wardija Ridge catchment. Salinity prohibits irrigation at low levels. Consequently, below 25 feet, sub-divided, large fields carry a great acreage of vines flanked by belts of cereals and sulla on slightly higher levels. The storm-water course has itself been ploughed over, but in periods of heavy rainfall, e.g. October and November 1957, extensive flooding occurs and water has been known to lie for periods of several weeks. It is this low-lying area which bears the name Bur Marrad (44) literally meaning 'the sickly meadow' or 'the area where sickness occurs'.

Slightly above the 25-foot contour, where water-logging is less likely, a wider range of crops occurs. This is particularly marked at the junction of the two main watercourses - the Wied il-Ghasel and the Wied ta'Ghajn Rihana (Fig. 106) where vegetable cultivation becomes important. Artichokes, tomatoes, marrows and brassicas are irrigated by water led from the valley sides. On the marled slopes below the Victoria Lines, at Habel Ghendus il-Kbir (41), lie large fields of dry-farmed vines, cereals and sulla.

In the main lowland area, few trees or walls and no buildings break the flat landscape. Lines of farms lie along the tal-Qraj (86) edge, while small hamlets are growing up along the main road which follows the western break of slope. Deep-digger ploughs and caterpillar tractors make tillage activity in this zone most uncharacteristic of Malta as a whole.

THE WESTERN SCARPLANDS (continued)

A.XI. BINGEMMA BASIN

The Wied ta'Ghajn Rihana rises upstream over a low saddle which leads from the Wied il-Ghasel to the higher Bingemma Basin. The structural and topographic asymmetry of this basin is paralleled by crop zonation. Cereals and sulla are dominant on the lower, northern floor below Migarr and is-Zebbieh. Vines become more prominent on an east-west belt of higher slopes and these field crops become generally poorer with a southward increase in altitude. They are, however, diversified by several *guiex* embayments which lie beneath the Victoria Lines scarp which defines the southern edge of the basin. These areas include Santi Gap (57) (Fig. 107) and the Wied ta'Bingemma (56). Irrigation is confined to the use of spring water in these pockets.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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owns no land or other property in common and its inhabitants are rarely called upon or choose to work for a common end. At the same time, villagers are conscious of belonging to a distinct social entity which is distinguished from other villages by a collective nickname and a common sub-culture.

Many villages have a dialect quite distinct from that of their neighbours, which the inhabitants, even those who have learned to speak 'correctly' (*bil-pulit*), normally use to each other; although they will invariably address strangers in their school Maltese. There are also a number of minor variations of certain customs between villages or districts. These may include the way church bells are rung to announce a death or the way some aspects of the festas are organized. Finally, each village has its own very private body of gossip, stories, scandals and jokes, which makes up a part of its history and tradition that is not shared with outsiders.

As a congregation and a religious corporation, the village *qua* parish owns land and other property, including the parish church. It also has an appointed leader in the parish priest. The inhabitants of the village meet regularly for worship, to take part in religious processions and to carry out other devotional activities. Furthermore, they act together to celebrate the annual festa of the patron saint, who symbolizes the unity of the secular and religious aspects of the village, for he is patron of both village and parish.

A village can also be regarded as a moral community. That is, people who live there must conform to a certain code of conduct. While the community cannot enforce this code with the type of formal sanctions the police and the Church use to punish infractions of secular and religious laws, public opinion can, and does, exert great pressure for conformity. A person who flouts the canons of convention becomes the object of malicious gossip and, depending on the nature of the offence, he may also become the target of overt hostile action and have his house front splashed with paint, or his front door burned. The only way to escape from the sanctions of public opinion is to move to one of the urban areas or the expanding new suburbs, where licence can be relatively anonymous.

Members of a village thus share a common body of custom and tradition; they also display an intense loyalty to their place of birth. This sense of loyalty is strongest during the annual festa of

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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differ from the villages. While only about sixteen per cent of the adult population of an average Maltese village is not native born, approximately two-thirds of the adults residing in the urban and suburban areas were born outside the communities in which they now live (see Table 2 below).

There is no rule of village endogamy or exogamy, and a bride and groom are free to choose where they wish to live and set up their household. The choice of residence is normally governed by available housing, place of work and the relative strength of the bride's and groom's ties with their respective families and villages. But in case of a conflict of interest, a wife is expected to follow the wishes of her husband. If housing is available in both the village of the wife and that of her husband, and the husband's place of work is in neither, there is a tendency for the couple to live in the wife's village. The Maltese themselves acknowledge that, all other things being equal, the ties between a wife and her family are stronger than those between her husband and his kin.

Thus in Farrug and Kortin, I found that approximately half the couples had married and settled within their respective villages. Less than one in twenty (4 per cent) of the couples were strangers who had moved there because of the shortage of housing in their own villages; and all of these had relatives already living in the two villages. The outsiders who married or moved into Farrug and Kortin formed one-fifth (21 per cent) of the adult population, or about 10 per cent of the total population of each. In slightly over half (56 per cent) the marriages between people from these two villages and other villages, the husband settled in his wife's village. This is the general trend in Malta, where most men work outside their villages. In Gozo, where farming is the chief occupation, it is more usual for a woman to move to her husband's village, for that is his place of work. People from the towns who marry villagers are reluctant to move into the villages, and it is therefore fairly common to find villagers, especially women, moving to join their spouses in the towns.

The general principles regarding marriage residence are reflected in Table 2.

The number of outsiders resident in a village is an important factor governing the degree to which its inhabitants consider themselves a corporate group. As outsiders always retain strong links with their place of birth, the solidarity of a village is inversely

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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575 The important officers of a band club are among the most influential people in the community, and are usually chosen from the village's leading citizens. The president is the figurehead of [571] the club. He greets distinguished visitors and handles many of the ceremonial and business relations the club has with other groups within and outside the community. He also presides over committee meetings and over the annual election of new officers. The day-to-day running of the club is in the hands of the secretary, who is registered with the police as the club's official representative. Much of the success of the club depends upon his ability to run its social activities and administrative affairs. Other important committee members are the vice-president, the treasurer and the bandmaster. The latter is very often an outsider who comes to the village only for the weekly rehearsal of the band.

575 554 Though the formal authority of the committee members extends over the members of the association only while they are in the club, their position in the club occasionally gives them a voice in decisions which affect the entire community. This, in turn, gives them a measure of authority over persons who are not members of the club.

575 184 But not all villages have band clubs. The small villages of Gharghur, Dingli and Safi have not been able to afford the luxury of their own bands; though each has a social club that performs much the same function as a social and civic centre. A few villages, such as Kortin, have both social clubs and band clubs. But there are neither band clubs nor social clubs in the Maltese villages of [517] Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk and Mġarr. In Gozo, only Rabat, Xewkija and Xaghra have band clubs. All the villages without clubs are fishing or agricultural communities. This may be because the men of these villages do not dispose of the leisure time in the evening necessary for a club to be a success: the farmers are too tired, and the fishermen are off tending their nets.

575 665 [526] [554] There are also political and football clubs in most Maltese villages. In Gozo there are a few football clubs, but no political clubs. These clubs are organized in much the same way as the band clubs, and corresponding office holders have similar functions and authority over their members. These offices, however, confer much less prestige. The football clubs, in particular, play only a small part in village affairs. The Malta Labour Party, as has already been noted, is the only political party which has clubs

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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[p. 55]

CHAPTER V

The Church and Village Politics

Most Maltese regulate their lives by the daily and monthly cycle of religious activities. The major divisions of the day are rung from the bells of the village church. They first ring the Paternoster half an hour before the first Mass. Then the Angelus bell rings a call to prayer at eight in the morning, at noon and at sunset. The final bell of the day is rung two or three hours after sunset, and is a brief request for the living to remember the dead in their prayers. The call of the Angelus is observed by many. When it is rung, work and conversation stop whether in a government office or a village café, men remove their hats, and someone among them leads them in a short prayer. In Gozo I have seen a busy square become suddenly silent and many people kneel in the street as the Ave Maria was rung at sunset. People also often kneel in the streets when the bells announce the elevation of the Host during a sung Mass, and during Benediction in the evening. And finally, late in the evening, clusters of relatives and neighbours can be seen sitting in their open doorways reciting the Rosary together before they go to bed.

Most girls and women and many boys and men attend one of the three or four daily Masses which are offered in all parish churches between four and seven in the morning. Virtually every one in the village attends one of the five or six Masses offered on Sundays. The few who do not attend are known to the village, and are the subject of gossip and other social pressure. Since the recent dispute between the MLP and the Church, however, their numbers are increasing.

As the church bells mark the important hours of the day, so the principal divisions of the year are set out by the annual national and parochial religious feasts and processions. Besides being major religious occasions, they are eagerly looked forward to as recreational events. Though secular spectacles, such as political rallies, the government-run Carnival procession and, above all, the

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Maltese Death, Mourning, and Funeral Customs.

764 Sir James Frazer's communication of a coroner's note about "Beliefs regarding Death in Cumberland"[1] has suggested to me that I might put on record Maltese funeral customs now extant, some of which are analogous to those noticed in Cumberland.

764 263 [184] [565] [171] Amongst our middle and lower classes the practice still lingers of placing a dish of salt on the stomach of the corpse, whether of a male or of a female. The popular belief in Malta is that the salt prevents early decomposition. Certeux and Carnoy[2] give the following interpretation of a practice by Arabs in Algeria: "*Il est de convenance religieuse . . . de lui poser sur le ventre* [of the dead person] *quelque chose de pesant, afin de prevenir le gonflement.*" One of our Maltese sayings runs:

[539]

"*Imût il-ghani u jmut il-fqir*
It-tnejn jitmelku ghal geûûa il-bir."

i.e. "Both the rich man and the poor man die, and both are salted for the pit" (a common rock tomb). This may, however, refer to the pickling or preservation of bodies in a saline solution.

764 The covering over of looking-glasses in the room where the body is lying is also practised by several Maltese families. Some go so far as to remove furniture, and turn round or take down pictures, in the death chamber and passages.

764 171 The following are the most characteristic features of existing Maltese practices, many of which are comparable to those of Sicily, while a few show some Eastern influence:—

(*a*) The washing of the dead body before shrouding. This is not a religious rite, and has no connection with that of Islam.

(*b*) The shutting of the eyelids, if open, and the raising of the chin by means of a band, usually a white kerchief, tied on the head.[3]

(*c*) The removal of door knockers and knobs; house doors are kept closed for several days; neighbours half-shut their own.

[1] Vol. xxxi., p. 154.
[2] *L'Algerie Traditionelle*, p. 223.
[3] This is practised in Algeria. See Certeux and Carnoy, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

The belief still lingers that the
764 lamp must remain lighted for forty days, during which the soul
765 of the departed remains above the flame.

764 (g) Some families give the poor bread. The love-feasts of
735 the primitive Christians were in mediaeval times replaced in
171 both Malta and Sicily by the distribution of cakes and of boiled wheat mixed with sesame. Distributions of meat and bread to the poor came also to be a custom at some *festas*, but were continued in Sicily mainly by the giving of beans and bread on All Souls' Day.[1] In Malta on that day, however, the old custom has been replaced by the free kitchens or the "Potage for the Poor" (*Borma tal-Fqâr*).

765 Mourning customs in Malta have during the last century
178 passed through wide changes and, as in other European coun-
[177] tries, have reverted to a more simple type. Some are purely
[192] mediaeval, and are influenced by the prolonged intercourse with Sicily and Italy during the rule of the Grand Masters. The vernacular term for mourning is *vistu*, corresponding to the Sicilian *visitusu* ("to be in mourning").

765 The wearing of special mourning clothes was general in the
292 fourteenth century, but became less marked by the year 1700.
178 Women used to wear woollen trailing skirts and dark shawls
● 184 over their heads. Some better-class people wore one black transparent veil over the head and another veil of black silk taffeta over the gown, reaching to the waist. A sort of Majorca woollen cloth is prescribed for mourning wear to the heirs under a will of A.D. 1543. The Grand Master's suite wore a special garment called *Scoto*, of thin light serge. Although it is nowadays customary with some families to put on as little mourning as possible and to shorten its period, a full mourning dress is worn by others for two full years after the death of parents. The simplest style of mourning, a black necktie and a crape arm band, is in general use after the death of a distant relative.

765 Family mourning is generally observed as follows:—
178 I. Closure of business premises, a mourning notice being affixed to the door.
[562] II. Women keep indoors for a few weeks, only going out in

[1] G. Pitrè, *Spettacoli e Feste Popolari*, vol. xii. p. 407.

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the early morning to hear mass. In old times such seclusion was much more strictly observed, and the period was never less than forty days. For men this sort of mourning did not exceed seven days, and is now generally limited to three days, after the funeral.

III. Old custom prohibited cooking for three days, and the family of the deceased was provided with meals by friends or distant relatives. This rule was, and perhaps is still, followed in some districts of Sicily and amongst Arab tribes of Northern Africa. While meals were being served the bereaved family sat with folded legs on the floor, which was covered with a straw mat. The historian Ciantar relates in 1772 that these mourning dinners still took place in his early days. This custom has now been discontinued, and our village people merely abstain from having their pastry and other food prepared in a public oven for a period of some months after the death of a member of the family.

IV. Men often do not shave for a fortnight or even a month. This practice was more in favour in old times. Middle and lower class people keep away from *festas*, and the higher class from theatres, dancing, and merrymakings.

V. People of rank wear a mourning dress for a few days following a death in their family, but country people are satisfied with wearing a black felt hat and a dark sash round the waist. Women, if wives or brides, follow the continental style of full mourning dress in crape. Some women do not wear a hat or bonnet during the first week of mourning, and go out in *faldettas*, a national head-covering which is more commonly used when attending religious services. Since the seventeenth century the Maltese *faldetta* has undergone some changes in shape and material. The old *faldetta*, as described by Ciantar, was a black veil or cowl covering the head and reaching to the heels, like the Arab and Sicilian women's trailing mantles. Apparently countrywomen wore a blue linen veil, which is still adopted, for economy's sake, in some of the eastern seaside hamlets of the island, but amongst the lower class in general the black hood, which matrons changed into silk with lace edges, was more common. Bombasine (without lace) or silk *faldettas* are now

5: Cremona 3-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Bombazine (without lace) or silk faldettas are now
292 the popular style. The vernacular *tulqâna* and *ghonnella* for
192 the *faldetta* point to its probable origin; the word *ghonnella* is
765 derived from the Italian *gonnella*. The term *falda*, with its
178 diminutive *faldetta* (skirt), suggests that this hood or wimple
301 represents the tail of the skirt put over the head inside out in wet weather. Black stone trinkets are worn in place of those of gold. Women in both villages and towns who cannot afford to buy special trinkets cover their earrings with black stuff.

The old funeral rites, described by Abela and Ciantar from
764 extracts from wills of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries,
[171 are only faint survivals of the gorgeous pseudo-pagan rites
177] which prevailed in all parts of continental Europe up to the period of the Reformation, and in Malta when under Italian influence. Up to 1872 the burial of the dead generally took
[192] place in churches or in churchyards (Maltese *zuntier*, from French *cimetière*). This still continues in country places, where
[171] people have family vaults. A law providing for extra-mural interment was proposed by De Rohan (A.D. 1775-1797), but it was only enforced by the Police Law of 1869, when a public cemetery was provided in 1871.

764 Since the adoption of the new burial law, funeral customs
178 have assumed a very simple character. Old custom required that the dead body should be placed on a handbarrow or in a coffin with a cushion stuffed with laurel and orange leaves
[534] fixed under the head. The body was then conveyed to the church, with the relatives and friends following, and the wailing of the mourners accompanied by the sound of bagpipes, which in some villages are now replaced by violins and counterbases to which lamentations are sung. Since the opening of the Addolorata Cemetery the dead are generally transported in
[533] hearses. The tolling of funeral bells was once so important that in many wills careful provision was made for it, and it even
[177] rivalled the usual charitable bequests. This corresponds to
764 Sicilian custom in the fifteenth century. After burial of the corpse, a black carpet or coverlet, or a velvet counterpane, was laid over the grave, and left there for some days. The offering
● [184] of flowers to the dead is at present in great favour amongst the less educated, but some of the higher class object to it as a pro-
fanation

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

fanation. Wreaths are laid on the grave, and oil lamps are lit on it for some days. The construction and decoration of the graves in the public cemetery is much the same as on the continent. Marble slabs with inscriptions are very common. Pillars with crosses on the top and sacred statues are also erected on bases of marble, or bronze reliefs symbolising Time and Eternity. The higher class own vaults in the form of chapels, in which an altar is erected and requiem masses are said.

In the professional and educated classes cards expressing sympathy are sent by friends to the mourning family, but in some districts, especially in the country, people still follow the old etiquette of paying a mourning visit within nine days of the death. Photographs of the deceased, with an inscription, are sent to friends and acquaintances.

A. CREMONA.

It has faded very rapidly

only in the course of the past generation in Malta to give way to what may be called commercial farming in which crops, animals or animal products are sold for money.

By using the 1948 Census material (B/167 - 1948, Table 53) it is possible to classify districts on the basis of the proportion of the farming element within the 'gainfully-occupied' section of the population as follows:

Table 1 (v. Map 2)

Urban (0-3%)		Fringe (3-10%)		Inner Rural (10-20%)	
Valletta	0	Balzan	5.48	Mqabba	10.5
Cospicua	0	Luqa	6.1	Marsaxlokk	10.6
Senglea	0	Birkirkara	6.16	Żurrieq	11.15
Vittoriosa	.008	Tarxien	6.43	Għaxaq	11.29
Gżira	.11	St. Venera	6.46	Attard	11.53
Sliema	.24	Qormi	6.88	*Victoria	13
Floriana	.43	Birzebbuga	7.3	Mdina	15.4
Pawla	.8	Żabbar	7.35	Mosta	16.56
Marsa	1.2	Żejtun	8.27	Żebbuġ	18.41
Hamrun	1.35	Lija	9.9	*Għajnsielem	19.2
Msida	1.36			Gudja	19.91
Kalkara	1.84				
Pieta	2.6				
St. Julian's	2.9				

Rural (20-50%)		Outer Rural (above 50%)	
Qrendi	20.25	*Kercem	56.43
Kirkop	22.33	*Xaghra	64
Naxxar	24.8	*Gharb	67.81
Rabat	25.6	*San Lawrenz	68.3
*Xewkija	27.7	*Żebbuġ	70.9
Gharghur	29.1	Nġarr	73.3
Mellieha	34.73	*Ghasri	82.7
Siggiewi	37.63	**Comino	89.47
*Sannat	39.04		
*Nadur	40.9		
Safi	46.87		
Dingli	47.4		
*Qala	47.6		
St. Paul's Bay	47.72		

Malta..... 9.11%
Gozo..... 41.78%
All Islands..... 12.28%

* - Gozo
** - The Island of Comino is statistically part of Gozo.

Clearly such proportional measurement is by no means an indisputable criterion for assessing the 'rurality' of Maltese and Gozitan villages but it provides a satisfactory overall basis for classification and is, as such, used in the ensuing account (Map 2).

Perhaps the most striking feature is the overwhelming significance of agriculture in Gozo. In Malta, by contrast, the Dockyard and other industrial concerns exert an increasing pull towards non-agricultural employment in all but the most remote districts (Map 4). Valletta and the Three Cities (Cospicua, Senglea and Vittoriosa) are the most 'urban', and the northern and western parts of Gozo the most 'rural'. An impression of the changing status of this rural (i.e. farming) element may be gained from the Census Reports since 1842 (B/167) but direct comparison is hindered by differences of tabulation between the census counts. However, the fact emerges that those villages

i.e. peasant subsistence farming.

[Village of Mġarr]

By the mid-Thirties Mġarr had 11.

175 become independent of Mosta as a Police area and had been
722 connected to the Telephone network[15]. Other amenities
648 to reach the village about this time included a number of
[365] levelled roads, although asphalting did not appear until
[491] after the 1939-45 War. During the War years most construction activity was halted. Some 700 refugees from the blitzed harbour areas were billeted in the village; thirty shelters were dug, and about 600 bombs fell in the vicinity of the village destroying two houses and killing three people (R/291). United States' forces camped near Mġarr prior to the Sicily invasion: an Italian aircraft crashed not far away. Mġarr heard about the war and experienced as much of it at first hand as most other rural parts of the Islands lying well away from the Dockyard, air bases and
[434] other strategic targets. Food rationing and Government
[241] control of production put the farmers of Mġarr in as strong a position as elsewhere but at the worst period of the siege even they were reduced to chewing carob beans[12].

36 By the advent of the present decade Mġarr had acquired the normal characteristics of community life of village Malta, with Church, school, police station, dispensary and
[178] doctor, telephones, and roads. The built-up area has since
[794] expanded rapidly. In this present decade, too, the village has gone on to 'catch-up' with older settlements to the extent of establishing the four branches of the Catholic
[795] Action movement (Appendix 4). A most modern and well-
[544] appointed 'oratory' has for five years been the focal point of Catholic teaching and social work in the Parish. Its theatre holds 700 and shows films on Sundays and special
[546] occasions. More recently a commercial cinema has opened in the village but, one understands, it cannot detract from the popularity of the oratory film show.

443 Within the past few years, shops have appeared in the
[366] village which is now independent in this respect for food and general items. Travelling vans, a prominent feature of the countryside, further swell the range of goods available on the spot and are joined in this door to door service by
[484] the weekly paraffin (petrolju) vehicle. For other items
[494] Mġarr housewives still make the journey to Mosta or
[178] Valletta on the buses which operate every few hours; a generation ago their mothers carried bread on their backs each week from Mosta, the parent village.

• 184 On account of its recent development, Mġarr lacks
794 certain features found in the larger and much older settlements. The Catholic Action is the only Lay Movement in the village - though it is notably active there, and of the Confraternities which are numerous in the older settlements Mġarr has only three (Appendix 4).

000 settlements Mgarr has only three (Appendix 4). Other characteristic features of rural Malta absent in Mgarr are the Band Club and the Football Club. The Band Club movement which spread rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of this became the major 'social' centre for men outside the Church itself (B/521). Similarly football has become a focus of extra-church activity in the Islands - more especially in Gozo where the Band Club has had only a limited extension outside the capital, Victoria. In the case of Mgarr one would expect the village to acquire these 'later-stage' features as it develops in size and
621 social diversity. The writer holds that at present Mgarr is essentially very close to what has been called the traditional Maltese village. Incidentally also its agricultural bias (Map 2) is less removed from the traditional than is the case in the more urban-influenced villages. It is certainly the most rural Parish of Malta and yet does seem more 'urbanate' in terms of social life than is the case over much of Gozo.

121 184 Having enumerated the essential elements of Maltese village structure as exemplified in Mgarr, a brief comparative study of other villages of the archipelago, many of which are much larger, older and more complex, is indicated. From observation two basic premises have been established:

(i) Despite the regional differentiation customarily made, rural society in the Islands has a basic homogeneity:

(ii) The modern problem of this rural society, the problem of the individual who is now socially out of sympathy with the life of the community which bred him, is common to all the rural community of the Islands.

The final question is therefore whether or not there can be a standard type of working rapprochement between the new and the old.

121 621 Two villages which may be compared with Mgarr in an effort to answer this question are Gharghur, a settlement of very old foundation, predominantly agricultural as is Mgarr and of like size, and Żurrieq, much larger, more urbanate in character, containing certain socio-functional divisions within itself, and also possessing two small satellite villages.

36 Morphologically GHARGHUR (Map 6) and Mgarr have little in common on first inspection. The latter contains many new or recent detached and semi-detached buildings within the regular street pattern previously laid down. Many of the houses are quite modern by prevailing standards and

178 milk production (notably the growth in the number of dairy
241 cattle in the Islands) has produced a new kind of operator
234 in Malta, the cows' milk producer, for whom field work is
512 secondary and then based primarily on the production of fodder for his animals and fruit and vegetables for the family.

512 Sundays and Feast Days bring a break in the routine.
527 Work in the fields lapses but animals still have to be
796 milked and fed. On festa days the whole village goes en
[241] fête and to Church. A procession of religious images,
[234] members of religious orders, priests, penitents and others to the accompaniment of fireworks and brass bands blaring through the bustle in the narrow streets and alleys fills the evenings of those not infrequent days of festa, fast and feast. These Holy Days and holidays have been the traditional breaks in the round of hard and heavy working
[178] days. The present younger generation still enjoys the
[575] merriment and processing of these occasions but the Band Clubs have lost for them something of their position of fifty years ago, and the cinema and bright lights of
[461] Valletta provide alternatives and additions to the range of possibilities. The young villager of today wants time off not only on festa days but on ordinary working days as well.

527 The village festa is a communal celebration. Both
796 men and women can share in the religious and social aspects.
562 The Band Clubs established in the most villages during the
575 past hundred years have however been solidly masculine (B/521). Other recreations of the farming community are
517 largely masculine pastimes such as shooting small birds, gossipping in the village squares and bars or at the M.M.U. collection depôt, watching the races at the Marsa course or arguing prices at the Sunday morning market 'Fuq il-Monti'
517 in Valletta. In Gozo the big assembly early each Sunday
443 morning in 'It-Tokk', the main square of Victoria, is the scene of much buying, selling and talking by villagers from all parts of the Island who come each week to the capital
[184] but rarely visit other villages. The focal pattern
[494] resembles that in Malta, where the bus routes converge on the Urban area and Valletta but provide comparatively little inter-village transport (B/381).

178 Dissatisfaction with the way of life outlined above,
241 whether for economic reasons (the small remuneration per man/hour of effort), or social considerations (the low status of the farmer, fisherman and other country people) is producing a younger generation anxious to escape if at all possible from following in the footsteps of their fathers and, thereby, accentuating the problem of how the farms of Malta and Gozo are to continue operating.

178 (the guaranteed price system for milk sold to the M.M.U.)
554 has had a similar effect. It has encouraged the farmer to
[234] turn to milk production and to increase his herd to the maximum (Section 2).

178 Briefly therefore, the position is that the farmer in
511 Malta and Gozo is now faced with a variety of factors
434 tending to make him money conscious to a degree unknown to his grandfather - who spent the 6d per year already mentioned. These factors basically underly the complex of socio-economic changes which have brought and are bringing improved living standards, "emancipation" and a greater range of demands:

(a) In diet, clothing, recreation and 'luxury' fields the farmer is demanding more than before, and this means money.

(b) The traditional pre-occupation with saving has been diverted towards the saving and investment of money rather than the accumulation of kind. Dowry is one example.

(c) The raised circumstances of the farmer have made him anxious to own his farm, and especially his house and (with the recent emphasis here) his animals.

(d) Anxious to get the most out of his holding within the present commercial system he is keen to develop his farm by acquiring machinery (with possible help from a Government loan) or by making some capital improvement. Suffering from shortage of labour, he wants to be able to pay hired farm labour the high wages demanded. His own children work away from the home farm.
[464]

[722] (e) The artificially distorted market conditions in siege and war-torn Malta between 1939 and 1945 put the farmer in a commanding financial position, which he continues to regard nostalgically as a Golden Age of Maltese farming. He has never fully been reconciled to his now changed position.

DEBT

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434 Thus, where the peasant farmer of a century ago saw in
[471] his farm the means of providing for the various needs of the family, the modern farmer in Malta regards his holding, his animals, and equipment, as the means whereby he can make the money which he needs to buy more new items, to expand
[184] his property and to build up his capital reserves. This is the picture as it would be ideally and as it is for a very small section of the farming community: one of the major problems of Maltese farming today is that it is by no means the position among the great bulk of the rural and farming
178 population of the Islands. If, having observed the present
426 position of money and the demands upon which it is based,
434 one turns to a more detailed examination of the financial status of the Maltese farmer the true nature of the problem emerges. Far from acquiring the money which he expects,

175 458 511 [468] [184] between the unskilled labourer and the skilled. This dichotomy was a regular feature during the nineteenth century, as in the twentieth, and is to be distinguished from the rise and fall of prosperity and depression which characterized the totality of economic life in Malta. Malta was highly susceptible to events in the Mediterranean basin and in Europe as a whole and was much affected by changes in trading patterns and in strategy, so that the fortunes of the Maltese fluctuated with the alternation of prosperity and depression during the nineteenth century. [731] The sequence of wars, trade booms and slumps, droughts, epidemics and other events which affected the Mediterranean in general was particularly strongly felt in vulnerable Malta (B/556).

175 184 511 178 The major economic developments arising from the growth of the dockyard and the consolidation of the Islands' role have been outlined in Section 1. The various stages in this expansion were reflected in the economic life and the living standards of the Maltese just as the chain of external events made their presence felt. In all this the fortunes of one section of the population, such as the farming community, could at no time stand unaffected by fluctuations within the economy of the Islands as a whole.

175 178 [184] [871] Malta remained sharply divided within itself by class, district and education and the parallel differences of living standards between one section of society and another were continued. But the later decades of the nineteenth century saw, on the social as distinct from the economic plane, the beginnings of general education which, during the present century, was to remove the illiteracy which had for so long prevented the rural classes in Malta and Gozo from having any experience of life and society outside the limits of the village. [184] [369] Improvements in transport and communication within the Islands and the spread of amenities from the Urban area to the villages in the later nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries further tended to remove the veil of isolation which had shrouded the villages of Malta and Gozo and kept them cut off from the social and cultural [621] changes of the towns. Traditionally, each village had been a closely-knit unit under a Parish priest, having little contact with Valletta and perhaps less with the villages in other parts of the Islands (Section 1).

In the later decades of the nineteenth century the forces indicated were beginning to modify the position but it was not until the present century and particularly

178 [178] [175] the years after 1939 that the cumulative effects of education, emancipation and communication were to produce a society very different from that which Maltese country [511] folk had known for centuries (Section 1). It became [184] different when the traditionally depressed sections of the community became restless and began to demand the improvements in their living standards which they came to believe should be theirs by right as well as need.

178 184 369 This is not to suggest that the present position of Maltese rural society is an 'end-product' of change. The opposite is true. The old and new exist side by side in agriculture and in the farming community of the Islands today. Some people, some places, and some features of life and work hold far more tenaciously to the old than do others where comparatively few years have seen considerable modifications of the traditional pattern.

175 458 464 511 By 1912, the Royal Commissioners were able to observe that the living standards of the labouring classes of Malta and Gozo compared well with those of other Mediterranean countries (B/186, p.25-6). "Building", they said, "is cheap and good and the country people are exceptionally well-housed". But, in their consideration of the economic state of the Islands as a whole, the Commissioners thought the picture much more gloomy. The depression which they found, though of only recent appearance, was being felt by the mass of the people, although "until the advent of the present depression, the condition of the people has been one of comparative comfort". To appreciate "The present distress, and the greatly extended unemployment of the working people of Malta.....it is necessary to recognise the entirely artificial nature of their former prosperity and employments, which depended to a large extent upon Imperial expenditure...." (B/186, p.12). Here did the Commissioners strike at the root of the problem which has grown to formidable proportions in the half-century since the report was made. They pointed to the position in which the economic structure of the country as a whole was based on the shifting sands of Imperial naval and military expenditure and in which the living standards of the Maltese population were therefore tied indirectly and directly to that Imperial expenditure. Moreover, within the Maltese population itself, it is not difficult to see that the first to be hit by a drop in Imperial expenditure (as happened between 1902 and 1911 and, again, in the post-1945 period) were and are the labouring and poorer classes generally lacking alternative employment in the Islands, in the event of their becoming redundant, and having often little or no capital reserves.

000 matter.

494 While the farmer does not favour the co-operative
442 movement at present he is generally dissatisfied also with
829 the pitkal system and complains of the excessive profits
178 being made by the pitkal, the sensal (a broker and transporter of produce) and the retailer. Very few do however venture to evade these middlemen completely by selling their produce directly to the consumer (B/387, p.17). This is probably the result in part of shortage of labour but in part also a reflection of the 'respect' in which the pitkal is held. The farmer is characteristically suspicious of any change in such a long-established part of his farming, even though he is loud with complaints of it.

208 The Government plan to centralize marketing on the
654 one hand and to encourage the co-operative movement in the
474 selling of produce on the other will not succeed without
44 a great deal of patient education of the farmer supplemented by material incentives such as subsidies and other assistance already given in other aspects of agricultural development. The most successful co-operatives in Maltese farming to date are probably the two tractor co-operatives founded with the initiative and grant of free equipment by C.A.R.E. (Section 2). Here the farmer has seen a clear financial saving in plowing costs with no capital outlay on his part. He must similarly be persuaded that centralization and Co-operatives in marketing would be to his advantage. Not only the farmers themselves but the consumers also would stand to benefit from a streamlining of marketing with grading and better packing and presentation of produce, while the improvements in Malta's position as an exporter of agricultural produce would fully justify the effort involved (B/253)[42].

YOUTH AND FARMING

464 In their pioneer investigation into the attitudes of
184 the Maltese farmer Fr. Cirillo and his Royal University
178 team stressed the crucial position of the younger generation in agriculture in the Islands (B/387). The present writer concurs with their views and considers the present retreat from farm and village as the most urgent problem in the industry. Something of the technical and economic background to this trend has been seen in Sections 2 and 3, but the social factors involved are no less important.

The fundamental contrast in outlook between the younger and older generations of the farming community today is that in the case of the older generation "with meagre opportunities in other occupations, and often

464 lacking any education at all they took up farming as their
184 natural calling" (B/387, p.9), but their sons are faced
178 with a choice both between occupations and ways of life. Their education is enabling them to compete with other sections of society for industrial and other non-agricultural employment while their emancipation, in terms of access to the world outside the village, is leading them to think of escape from the lowly social status of their fathers. They have been brought up to appreciate the insecurity of farming with its inadequate and fluctuating income and have seen the technical limitations and the hard and monotonous schedule of work with which their fathers have had to contend in order to provide even the most frugal living standards for their families. In very many cases the younger generation have been actively discouraged by their elders from contemplating farming as a livelihood. Within society as a whole they see farming as something of a low 'caste' and one example of this is the opposition faced by many a young farmer if he wishes to marry into a non-farming family.

The importance of this revolt on the part of the younger generation is clear when one considers the topic of this Section. The current policy is to change the pattern of farming in the Islands and to raise the standards of living of the farmers by the variety of methods mentioned and these are, quite naturally, being aimed primarily at the present farmers, that is to say the older generation. But the future of farming depends on the future farmers who are, it would appear, leaving or have already left the industry. Many of them do not plan to stay in farming longer than the time necessary to find another occupation and they are consequently not concerned with loans, subsidies, lectures, and the work of the advisory service. The farming which they are anxious to leave will, it is hoped, change rapidly in response to the measure outlined. But, even if only a few years are needed to show substantial results and a better kind of farming is evolved, the younger generations may not be there to take over. Many of them will have emigrated from the Islands altogether and others will have left the villages for all manner of employment in the towns.

654 The official aid to farming policy may fail, one
829 fears, on two accounts:

(i) The measures designed to assist the farmer and farming have not yet been as successful as was hoped because of the difficulties of having rapid and far-reaching changes accepted by a suspicious, conservative and largely illiterate body of farmers,

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Candle and the solemn chanting of the 796
"*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*" which is the signal for the uncovering of the Church pictures, which had been covered during the two preceding weeks, and the simultaneous ringing of all the Church bells which were kept hushed in token of mourning during the two preceding days.

General rejoicings now commence, and Easter greetings are profusely exchanged amongst all classes of the people.

Peculiar custom prevails in Valletta 796
and Vittoriosa on Easter Eve. Just 533
at sunset, two or three men, one with 184.
a big drum and the others with fifes, playing a merry tune, go about the streets, followed by large crowds of men, among whom noisy bands of lads, who keep rushing and pushing wildly all

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

796 the time through the spectators, each
533 adding his quota to the universal cla-
184 mour. Everything, however, is done in perfect good humour and no one dreams either of giving or taking offence. (*)

EASTER

796 Very early on Easter Sunday, before daylight, there is, in each town and in some of the villages of Malta, a procession with the image representing the Resurrection of our Lord.

The most popular of these processions is undoubtedly that of Valletta.

Large crowds of people assemble, as

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[97] (*) The Greeks celebrate the feast of Easter with singing and shouting in honour of the Resurrection --with crakling of a large bonfire on Easter evening and on Easter morning before daybreak.
(Brand's "Popular Antiquities").

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

796 tables, piled with the castellated erec-
543 tions of honey and almonds, tempt
438 those crowds of country people to spend
265 what they have purposely put by for this annual holiday.

After three or four hours of high revel the wheeled vehicles return home with their jolly occupants singing all along the road.

Sta. MARIA

796 On the 15th of August, the day de-
184 dicated to the Assumption of the B. V. Mary (Santa Maria), nearly all the Island of Malta is *en fête*.

[103] Seven of the twentyfour villages, that is:— Casals Musta, Dingli, Attard, Crendi, Micabiba, Asciak and Gudia celebrate on this day their titular feast with the usual illuminations, fireworks and processions.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

This feast is also celebrated with great pomp at the Cathedral Church of città Vittoria, Gozo, and for this reason our sister Island is, on the occasion, an attraction for the Maltese people. In fact, several steamers and launches decorated with coloured flags, are employed on the eve of the festival, and sometimes for some days before, transporting the vast concourse of people who, influenced either by a spirit of devotion or a desire to enjoy a pleasant trip, a healthy change, and a little fresh air, embrace the opportunity of paying a visit to the famed Island of Calypso to behold the festivities which take place there at the festival of "Santa Maria."

On the evening of the 14th the illuminations and fireworks are very splendid; the religious ceremonies, on that,

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

527 These races were first held on St.
541 Roque's Feast day in consequence of
776 the working of miraculous cures of
755 the plague by St. Roque who was
796 specially invoked by persons afflicted,
195 while stricken himself with the desease, at Piacenza, in Italy.

THE "VITTORIA"

527 ***Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

[796] The 8th. of September, the day dedicated to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is no doubt the grandest and the most popular day for the people of these Islands.

Both the streets and church of Senglea—the town in which the feast is celebrated—present on this occasion a most lively appearance.

[784] The grand illumination and the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

beautiful display of fireworks, on the eve of the festival, attract thousands of spectators not only from the towns and villages of Malta but also from the sister Island.

Hundreds of Gozitans flock to Malta in order, as it were, to take part in the general rejoicings held on this special day of the anniversary of the raising of the great siege of Malta, which ended in the total repulse of the Turks, after a most heroic defence by the Knights of St. John, united to the bravery of the Maltese, under the intrepid Grand Master Jean La Valette, in 1565.

In the afternoon of the feast (8th Sept.) the grand harbour presents indeed a very lively appearance, there being boat racing and the *giostra* or greasy pole, the prizes for which are given

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

galleys come sailing across the square, on wires stretched over the people's heads, towards the fort, they open fire in great style. One after the other they meet their fate, for the fort peppers them cruelly and finally sets them on fire, so that soon—hulls, sails, masts, yards, crescent flags, and all the warlike things about them are in few seconds wrapped in flames and destroyed. 527 541

Before leaving the description of the celebration of this National *fète* at Vittoriosa, I wish to mention that hundreds of loaves are distributed to the needy of that town on the morning of the feast. 527 735

Worth mentioning is the custom which prevails, on the 7th of Sept. among the women residing at Rabato (Notabile) and in the country surrounding it. These, to celebrate the com- 184 527 533

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

184 memoration of the Victory won by the
527 Maltese in the great siege of 1565,
533 instead of coming to take part in the amusements held in Valletta and in the other towns, meet in groups on the terraces, or flat tops of their houses, and keep singing merrily till very late at night.

ANOTHER NATIONAL FEAST

527 The celebration of the glorious vic-
186 tory won by the Maltese over the Turks in 1565 has been of good use to the Maltese, It has enabled them to comprehend more keenly the historic value of this Island.

[175] In fact, some two years ago another
[648] national commemoration has originated at Città Vecchia, on the 3rd or 4th Sunday of September, to celebrate the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

796 in companies to some one of their
574 friends, at whose house they amuse them-
262 selves eating honey cakes and pancakes or fritters, and playing for nuts till the church bells ring a little before or after midnight.

At the conclusion of the service they come out again and devote the remainder of the night to amusements.

796 The approaching festival of Christmas
534 is heralded in some of the villages of
[184] Malta by the appearance of the "zakk" and "tambur" players in the streets. (*)

[237] The *zakk* or bagpipe is a wind instrument—one of the primitive instruments of sylvan music—formed of an inflated dog skin, which is held by the player under his left arm, with the legs

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[541] (*) The *Zakk* and tambourine are also in use amongst our lower classes on the days of Carnival.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

585 ered flowers upon them, also nuts and grains of wheat, and on their entering the house one of the kinsfolk threw from one of the windows or balcony a few handfuls of barley and some small coins on their heads.

The nuptial feast took place immediately afterwards; but the bride ate in a separate apartment. The repast being ended she was seated next to her husband and drank out of the same cup.

[184] [535] [465] [431] At a village wedding the company danced during the feast; each dancer throwing a piece of money to the fiddlers and each guest contributing a fowl to the repast.

[591] The bride always passed a week in her father's house, after which she was received with much pomp by her husband whose relations gave a great feast which was called il *hargia*.

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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[262]

THE SWEETHEART'S BARGAIN

In the marriage contract, they have it for a pact,
That he takes her to the Feste and sets her on a wall.
That he buys her cakes of sweetmeat, of the sort with hempseed made.
For that's the kind of sweetmeat a bride likes best of all.

It is believed that such a clause used actually to be embodied in the written contract drawn up by the parents and the go-between.

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[184]

Each little hamlet has its own feast, in honour of its own particular patron. Each has its own peculiar forms. Of the national feasts that of St. John naturally occupies a place of considerable importance. Certain aspects of its celebration, however, indicate that the Order of St. John was not alone responsible for the enthusiasm which this saint inspires. Busuttil, who has already been quoted at some length, writes of the Feast of St. John as follows:

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"Not unlike other nations, the Maltese are not indifferent in celebrating the Nativity of St. John by kindling great fires in the public streets, and giving their children dolls to carry in their arms on this day, in order to make good the prophecy respecting the Baptist 'Multi in nativitate ejus gaudebunt.'

Days and even weeks before this festival groups of children are seen going out into the country fields to gather straw, twigs, and all sorts of other combustibles which they store up for St. John's Eve.

On the night of June 23rd, the day before the festival of the Saint, great fires are kindled in the streets, squares, and market places of the towns and villages of the Island, and as fire after fire blazes out of the darkness of that summer night, the effect is singularly striking.

These fires are sometimes kept up for hours, being